

# Ron Embleton

## *The* **SECRET** *of the* **TROLLS**



Once Upon a Time

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ALL IN COLOUR - MAKES LEARNING A JOY

# Once Upon a Time

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# The SECRET of the TROLLS



1. Hundreds of years ago in the lovely country of Sweden there stood a proud castle, in which lived Lady Ulfstan, her daughter and their servants. It should have been a happy home but it was not. Never a day passed without the daughter flying into a bad-tempered rage for nothing. The castle was filled with her shrill, angry voice as she screamed, and nothing would ever quieten her.

2. "Please, my daughter, do not carry on so," sighed her mother. "You are upsetting the servants and even frightening the dogs. I beg of you to be quiet." But the daughter would not. "If I wish to shout and scream I shall do so as much as I like," she answered. "You are always complaining that I do not know how to behave myself. How I hate living in this horrid castle."

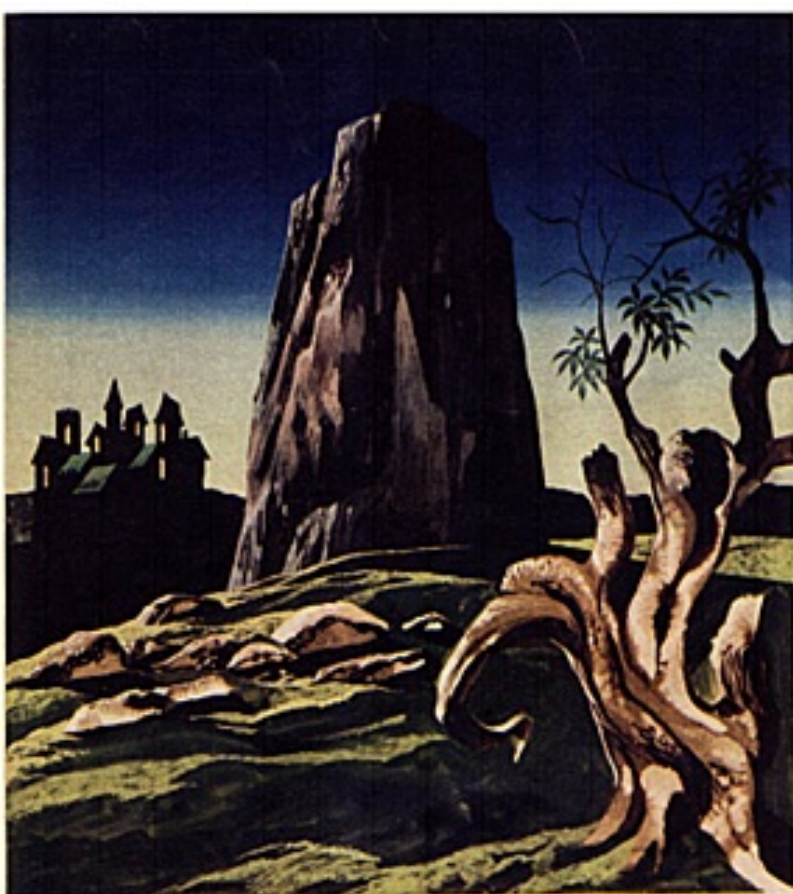


3. Downstairs in the kitchen, the servants were whispering to one another. "Listen! It's that young lady again," said the cook. "If she were my daughter I would turn her out of my house for her tantrums." "She is supposed to be Lady Ulfstan's own daughter, but sometimes I wonder about that," said the other.



4. At times Lady Ulfstan wondered about it, too. Her husband had died when her daughter was a baby and then she herself had been very ill. After many months Lady Ulfstan got better and was able to see her child again—but by that time the daughter had changed from a happy baby into a sour, ill-tempered girl.





5. Lady Ulfstan looked out of the window across the fields and hills. Her attention became fixed upon a mighty lump of rock standing on bare ground. It was said that underneath the Magle Stone, as it was called, there lived some trolls. She could not help thinking that they had a connection with her daughter.



6. She called for Mark, one of her bravest servants. "I will reward you with a fine horse and splendid clothes if you dare to visit the home of the trolls beneath Magle Stone and learn their secret," she told him. "Try and find out what goes on there and come back and tell me everything that happens."



7. "I will go, good lady, though people do say that there is great danger for a person to visit the underground home of the trolls," Mark told her. Bravely the young man went to the stable and saddled a horse. The night was dark and the wind was cold as he set out towards the mysterious Magle Stone.

8. "Go back—go back, young man, before it is too late!" the ice-cold wind seemed to be sighing in his ear. But Mark had plenty of courage and he rode his horse towards the great rock. "What the trolls are like I do not know, but they are said to be different from people like myself," he said, pressing forward.



# *The* **SECRET** *of the* **TROLLS**



1. Mark, the servant of Lady Ulfstan, was a very brave young man and he was mounted on a very fearless horse—but both of them trembled a little as they drew nearer and nearer to the great rock known as the Magle Stone. Beneath it, so it was said, lived a strange race of little people called Trolls.

2. "Because her ladyship is so kind and gentle I will do as she asks and find out about these Trolls," murmured Mark to himself. "She believes that they have a secret connection with her bad-tempered daughter." When he came closer a cloud of smoke billowed up from the base of the mighty Magle Stone.



3. Then with a crash the huge boulder swung slowly up into the air, supported by four huge golden pillars. Getting down from his horse, Mark peered into the huge cave below and saw a vast hall filled with a swarm of Trolls. They were having a feast of some kind and were shouting as they ate and drank.



4. Some of them caught sight of their uninvited visitor and pointed at him. They made signs to Mark that he should join them and, a little nervously, he did so. The Trolls crowded round him as a pretty young girl came up to Mark, bearing a costly cushion, on which lay a drinking-horn and a music pipe.





5. Then the Troll King spoke in a deep voice which silenced all the chatter and noise. "Keep quiet while our young guest drinks a toast to our health and then blows three times upon the pipe," he shouted. Mark was just about to do this when he noticed the young girl making secret warning signs to him.



6. She put her finger to her lips and shook her head and it seemed to Mark that it would be dangerous if he did what the Troll King asked. He turned suddenly and made a dash for the entrance hole beneath the Magle Stone. "Stop him!" the Troll King shouted, but Mark was swift to reach his horse.



7. Leaping into the saddle, Mark set off at a full gallop towards Lady Ulfstan's castle. Behind him came the Trolls, shouting for him to stop and waving their fists. "Faster, good horse—faster!" panted Mark, "If they catch me, I tremble to think what might happen, for they are wicked."

8. The one thing Mark was anxious to do was to reach the castle and tell Lady Ulfstan exactly what had happened under the Magle Stone. "She would be very interested in the pretty young girl who warned me," he thought. "Somehow she was different from the others. What can be her secret?"



# The SECRET of the TROLLS



1. Mark, the brave young servant of Lady Ulfstan did not stop the headlong gallop of his horse until he was safe on the other side of the castle moat and the drawbridge had been pulled up, keeping out the Trolls. He felt he had had a narrow escape from the underground world of the Trolls below the Magle Stone.

2. When Lady Ulfstan heard the thunder of a galloping horse approaching she rose from her bed, flung on a gown and went to meet Mark, eager to hear what had happened on his visit to the Trolls. She saw the angry little men on the other side of the drawbridge, shaking their fists in great annoyance.



3. Breathless, Mark told her ladyship about the meeting of the Trolls. "The King Troll handed me a horn of wine and a music pipe," he said. "He ordered me to drink the health of the Trolls and then blow three times upon the pipe, but a fair maiden secretly warned me not to, and I had to make an escape."



4. Time passed by and Lady Ulfstan did not ask Mark to make a second dangerous trip to the land of the Trolls. Meanwhile, her ill-tempered daughter continued to scream and shout and stamp her feet in fits of fury. Trembling servants hid behind corners when they saw her approach, keeping out of her way.





5. Lady Ulfstan did not know what to do. She believed that this was not really her own daughter and that the secret of her real daughter was known only to the Trolls. But for the moment she busied herself with writing letters, inviting all the noble knights to visit the castle, hoping that one would marry the girl.



6. "Marriage to a kind and noble knight may work wonders for a young girl," she thought to herself. So she sent Mark, the servant, to visit all the castles in the surrounding countryside with an invitation to the young knights and nobles to spend a week or two at the castle to enjoy some Winter sports and games.



7. The invitations were well received by the young knights and nobles. They knew that Lady Ulfstan was a splendid hostess and would provide them with good food and good times at the castle. They had also heard that Lady Ulfstan had a daughter, and a very pretty one—but they did not know the ill-temper of the girl.

8. There was deep snow on the ground when they began to come to the castle from several different ways. They had dressed themselves in their finest riding clothes and came mounted on their best horses. The castle looked splendid and inviting and none of them guessed the sadness and trouble that lay within its walls.



# The SECRET of the TROLLS



1. Many young knights and noblemen accepted the invitation of Lady Ulfstan to spend a week-end at her castle, and in the evening at a great feast she told them of things that were a great puzzle to her. First, there was her daughter—a pretty girl with such a bad temper no one could bear to go near her.

2. Secondly there was the mystery of the Trolls, who lived in a great cavern beneath the Magle Stone. She believed that there was a secret connection between them and her ill-tempered daughter. Her servant had not been able to find out because it was a dangerous place. At this brave young Sir Sten Boson stood up.



3. "I will visit this place you call the Magle Stone and see what I can find out, your ladyship," he declared boldly. And without wasting another moment he went down to the stable and saddled his horse. It was dark outside, the sky was starless and a keen wind swept whistling and howling over the fields. Shivering a little, Sir Sten made his way to the Magle Stone.



4. As he drew nearer to the giant piece of rock, he saw smoke coming from the ground beneath the stone. Then the knight heard a sudden crack like thunder and the ground shook beneath his feet. The huge Magle Stone rose of its own accord on four golden pillars and crimson flame came gushing out from underneath it. It was a scene to frighten even the bravest human being.





5. Slipping off his horse, Sir Sten went closer and came to a flight of steps leading down into a vast underground cavern. He could hear the murmuring of voices, and summoning all his courage he approached to find out what was causing it. "So this is the home of the Trolls—I must be careful," he said.



6. The darkness of the cave was pierced by the flames of a hundred blazing fires and in the flickering light Sir Sten saw swarms of Trolls. They were jumping up and down, swinging their arms and legs in a sort of dance as they drank wine from horns, which they waved above their heads, shouting all the time.



7. Sir Sten crept a little farther down the steps. One of the Trolls caught sight of him and stopped dancing to point at him. He gave a shout which brought other Trolls scurrying from behind rocks in the cave. Most of these carried stout wooden staves and they surrounded Sir Sten like a cloud of angry bees.

8. They crowded round the young knight, jostling and poking him and mocking him. "See what we have here—a gallant young adventurer from the world above," one of them cackled. "He has come to find out our secrets and he will know some of them right soon. Let the Troll-King decide what to do with him."



# The SECRET of the TROLLS



1. Surrounded by the strange Troll men in their underground home, being jostled and pushed and pointed at, it was no wonder that even a young knight as brave as Sir Sten Bosen began to feel alarmed. "What do you want of me?" he asked. "I have not come here to do you any harm." Suddenly the Trolls moved back from Sir Sten, making way for a girl to approach him.

2. The young Troll-girl came up and offered him a drinking horn filled with wine. She also brought with her a finely-made little music pipe. "Take this drinking horn and drink a toast to the health of our Troll King and then blow this music pipe three times," she told him. It seemed a very simple request that could have no harm in it, so Sir Sten nodded.



3. "I will drink a toast to the Troll King and blow the pipe three times," he readily agreed. At this the Trolls stamped and shouted even more loudly and the young knight was just going to do as he had been asked when a fair-haired young girl came close to his side. "Young knight, take care and do not taste a drop," she whispered. "Pour the wine away at once."

4. This Sir Sten did, and then in a voice that could not be heard by the Trolls, the fair-haired girl added, "Please take me away from this place. I am a prisoner and do not rightly belong here." Quick as lightning, Sir Sten slipped the music pipe and drinking horn inside his jacket, then snatched up the girl in his arms and made a sudden dash for the stone stairs.





5. When the Trolls realised that they had not only been robbed of their fair prisoner but also of the horn and pipe, their two most precious treasures, they set up most furious howls and screams. In Sir Sten's arms the girl shivered at the sound of them. "Hurry!" she pleaded. "We must never be caught now." Sir Sten nodded and raced out from beneath the flaming Magle-Stone.



6. The young knight's horse stood ready and waiting. Leaping into the saddle and holding the young girl in front of him, Sir Sten set the gallant animal at a fast gallop through the trees of the frozen forest. Behind them came the swarm of Trolls like angry bees, shouting and waving sticks. For such little men, they moved across the ground at a surprising turn of speed.



7. They came to a field which had been ploughed and was now lined with deep, frozen furrows. As the horse galloped along the length of the furrows, the Trolls kept up their pursuit. "They are gaining on us!" gasped Sir Sten. "They seem to have powers of magic to be able to run so fast. My horse is at a gallop."

8. The fair-haired girl clung tightly to him. She was no longer shivering with fright but seemed to be thinking hard, as if trying to remember something. "There is a way of getting rid of Trolls," she whispered. "Oh, if only I could remember it!" "Think hard, for I fear it is our only chance of escape," gasped Sir Sten.



# The SECRET of the TROLLS



1. The brave young knight Sir Sten Bosen had rescued a young and pretty girl from the underground home of the Trolls, where she had been kept prisoner for many years, and both were seated upon a horse galloping hard along a furrowed field. But behind them came a swarm of Trolls, shouting and waving thick sticks.

2. The Trolls were close on the heels of the riders, who feared that at any moment they would be pulled down from the horse and captured. "Don't follow the furrows—ride across them!" the girl suddenly whispered in the knight's ear. Sir Sten at once turned his horse so that the tracks of its hoofs crossed the furrows.



3. Instantly the Trolls stood rooted to the spot. They yelled and shouted, they twisted and turned and they raised their fists in rage, but they were not able to move. There on the ground in front of them the tracks formed a long row of crosses—and the sign of a cross was enough to halt Trolls and make them powerless.



4. Sir Sten left the shouting Trolls behind and now all danger was over—but he continued at a gallop towards the castle owned by Lady Ulfstan. The drawbridge was down and as the horse charged over it with clattering hoofs, he breathed a sigh of relief at the welcome sound, for now he was sure that both of them were safe.





5. When the young knight came walking into the castle hall with the beautiful young girl by his side, Lady Ulfstan gazed spellbound at them and then her eyes filled with tears at the sight of the girl. "Bridget, my own rightful daughter!" she called out. And flinging her arms round the girl's neck, she kissed her tenderly.

6. "Now the secret of the Trolls is explained," Lady Ulfstan said. "Years ago, the Trolls exchanged my baby daughter for one of their own baby Trolls, who has lived with me ever since and has been the most bad-tempered girl in the world." Then all three of them turned and saw the former young Lady of the castle.



7. She was still screaming with bad temper and stamping her feet, but now she had a good reason to be angry, because the rightful daughter of the castle had returned home safely to her mother. There was no longer a place for her in Lady Ulfstan's home, so she suddenly decided to return to the home of the Trolls.

8. Putting two fingers into her mouth she gave a sharp whistle, and the startled onlookers saw her fly right up into the air and disappear out of the open window. And as the Troll girl floated away across the countryside towards the Magle-Stone, Lady Ulfstan gave a sigh of relief. At last she felt happy again.